A report from England on discrepancies in cigarette-lung cancer theory by Dr. R.D. Passey was circulated both by wire services and syndicated columnists.

WORLD-TELEGRAM AND SUN
New York, New York
September 14, 1962

Extent of Smoking Is Unrelated To Cancer, Scientist Believes

By DELOS SMITH
United Press International

A noted professor of experimental pathology calls attention to a discrepancy in the statistical evidence which suggests cigaret smoking is a cause of lung cancer. In none of this evidence is it claimed that the heavy smoker is stricken earlier in life than the light smoker.

Science's experiences with cancer-causing substances all show that the lighter the repeated dosage, the longer it takes for the substance to do its evil work, Dr. R. D. Passey said. If cigaret smoke directly caused cancer "one would certainly expect" the heavy smoker to be felled years before it happened to the light smoker.

Studied 499 Cases

Yet none of the statistical studies in many parts of the world have shown this result.

Passey himself studied the smoking histories of 499 men with lung cancer, grouping them according to the number of cigarets smoked. He found that on the average the amount of smoking had not affected the age at which the men developed their cancers—the light smokers got their disease at approximately the same age as the heavy smokers.

Nor did the number of years of smoking, whether lightly or heavily, make any appreciable difference among the 499.

No Difference

"Those who started smoking early smoked for some 51 years, whereas the late starters smoked for only 31 years or so. Yet there was no great difference between the daily amounts which patients in each group said they smoked. Each member of the group which began early must have smoked over 150,000 cigarets more than the late starters.

"These figures offer the clearest evidence that the age when lung cancer develops is determined by neither the amount smoked nor the age at which smoking began. If this is true, tobacco smoke did not act as a carcinogen (cancer-causer). It is apparently not the number of cigarets smoked but something related to the age of the individual which determines when he gets lung cancer."

Doesn't Exonerate Smoking

Passey, however, was far from exonerating cigaret smoking. "I do not belittle the important part which smoking plays" in the development of lung cancer, he said. He thought it "dangerous" to smoke but more dangerous to smoke in damp climates conducive to respiratory illnesses than to smoke in dry sunny climates.

In Passey's view lung cancer is a "natural" form of cancer and is not the result of any cancer-causing chemical. It results from an accumulation of illnesses and irritants which affect the respiratory system. Among the irritants he included tobacco smoke, industrial fumes and the smogs of cities.

Passey has had a distinguished career in the science of disease states — pathology. He is a professor emeritus and now does cancer research work at the Chester Beatty Research Institute in London.

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